

MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI NAȚIONALE  
OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ  
ETAPA NAȚIONALĂ, BRĂILA, aprilie 2014  
SECȚIUNEA B /PROBA SCRISĂ  
CLASELE a XI-a/a XII-a

Varianta 2

**Question I (50 points)**

Read the text below and then write **an essay in which you suggest solutions to the problems** illustrated by the article. **(350 words)**

A new study sponsored by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center has highlighted the prospect that global industrial civilisation could collapse in coming decades due to unsustainable resource exploitation and increasingly unequal wealth distribution. The research project is based on a new cross-disciplinary 'Human And Nature DYnamical' (HANDY) model, led by applied mathematician Safa Motesharri of the US National Science Foundation-supported National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center, in association with a team of natural and social scientists. The study based on the HANDY model has been accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed Elsevier journal, *Ecological Economics*.

It finds that according to the historical record even advanced, complex civilisations are susceptible to collapse, raising questions about the sustainability of modern civilisation: "The fall of the Roman Empire, and the equally (if not more) advanced Han, Mauryan, and Gupta Empires, as well as so many advanced Mesopotamian Empires, are all testimony to the fact that advanced, sophisticated, complex, and creative civilizations can be both fragile and impermanent." By investigating the human-nature dynamics of these past cases of collapse, the project identifies the most salient interrelated factors which explain civilisational decline, and which may help determine the risk of collapse today, namely: Population, Climate, Water, Agriculture, and Energy.

These factors can lead to collapse when they converge to generate two crucial social features: "the stretching of resources due to the strain placed on the ecological carrying capacity"; and "the economic stratification of society into Elites [rich] and Masses (or "Commoners") [poor]" These social phenomena have played "a central role in the character or in the process of the collapse," in all such cases over "the last five thousand years." However, the scientists point out that the worst-case scenarios are by no means inevitable, and suggest that appropriate policy and structural changes could avoid collapse, if not pave the way toward a more stable civilisation.

**(NASA-funded study: industrial civilisation headed for 'irreversible collapse'? in [www.eurotopics.com](http://www.eurotopics.com), accessed March 16, 2014)**

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**Question II (50 points)**

Write **an article for a newspaper** addressing the issue of competition in arts starting from the views presented in the text below. **(250 words)**

And then we have the Oscars. The movie awards season seems to have been going on since Christmas, with the Golden Globes, Baftas, Screen Actors Guild, Directors Guild and the Uncle Tom Cobby Collective all dishing out gongs to a pick 'n' mix of the same four or five titles and actors. Yes, there are some exceptionally fine films and great performances up for glory, movies which deserve as wide an audience as possible. But is pitting one against the other the best way to shake members of the public into actually getting off their backsides and going to a cinema to see them the best way to go about it? I think not.

Art is not and should never be about competition in this sense. Of course, all artists should be in competition with themselves to produce the best work they can, but placing such emphasis on what is essentially an industry shindig is, quite simply, daft. How can anyone possibly decide whether *12 Years a Slave* is a 'better' film than *Gravity*? I awarded both films five stars in this paper, and they are fabulous pieces of work. But to even attempt to say that one is superior to the other when they're completely different in terms of story and execution is plainly ridiculous.

Art is not sport. There you either score more goals, hit more runs or reach the finishing line first and you're the winner. That's simple. But when you start bringing in notions of artistic and aesthetic merit, it ceases to be sport and mutates into something else entirely. The reverse is equally true, so get whatever you can from *Nebraska*, *American Hustle*, *Dallas Buyers Club* and the rest, debate their merits and flaws but please, don't put them in competition with each other.

**(Art is not a competition and awards like Oscars don't mean anything** by George Byrne – 01 March 2014, in [www.eurotopics.com](http://www.eurotopics.com))

**Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Timp de lucru 3 ore.**